Testæ osseæ mensura.

	unc.	lin.
Longitudo dorsi	5	6
Latitudo ejusdem	4	4
Altitudo	3	5
Longitudo Sterni	5	3

The shell of this elegant species has always been admired as one of the most favourite ornaments of amateur museums; but, until of late years, the living animal had scarcely been known to naturalists. Daudin indeed complains that no perfect description had been given of it, as travellers had neglected to bring home entire specimens either stuffed or in spirit; and Schœpff was constrained to figure a shell, of which the anterior lobe of the sternum had been broken away for the purpose of extracting the internal parts, which he says was the case with every specimen he had seen. Within the last few years, however, I have possessed many living individuals of various ages, and have received them from India, from Madagascar, and from the Cape of Good Hope. I have never been able to keep them alive during the whole winter in this climate.

The distinctions between this species and *T. actinodes* are given fully in the account of the latter. There is no doubt that the description given by Lacépède as of *Testudo geometrica*, was taken from a specimen of *T. actinodes*. This is evident from the number of marginal plates which he mentions as belonging to the species, namely twenty-three, which number is invariable in the latter, from the absence of the nuchal plate. Daudin describes the true *T. geometrica*, but gives the other as a variety.

The error into which Lacépède has fallen, in supposing that this species is the *Hicatee* of Browne's Natural History of Jamaica, is one only of numberless mistakes which have arisen from the partial knowledge formerly possessed of these animals, and from a want of giving due consideration to their geographical distribution. I am not acquainted with a single species of land or fluviatile tortoise which can be considered as strictly indigenous to the two

hemispheres. Even *Testudo Indica*, which is found in the Gallapagos Islands, and at the Cape of Good Hope, as well as in India, must probably be considered as having reached the two latter localities only through the medium of commerce, and as being truly indigenous only in the former. The *Hicatee* of Browne is doubtless *T. tabulata*.

Testudo luteola of Daudin is undoubtedly an accidental variety of this species, and not, as Mr. Gray asserts, a mere shell which had lost the plates. It is true that the bony shell of this species, when denuded of the plates, is of a light yellow colour, and there are slight traces of the radiations in a brighter hue on the surface of the bone; but the figure in Daudin, in which the sulci of the plates are very evident, as well as the observations of the author, convince me that it must have been a variety in which the black colour had not been produced. This is the more probable from the fact that the sternum is often found almost wholly of a rich yellow colour.